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ABSTRACT

This book is part of an international series developed as a collaboration among the author, the illustrator, an advisory group of elementary school teachers and an aademic specialist on the subject. This volume provides in brief and simple terms some facts about the geography, history, and daily life of China. Some of the questions this book seeks to answer are: Why are Chinese houses guarded by animals? Why was the Great Wall built? What foods do the Chinese prefer? When is the Chinese New Year? Additional topics are the peoples of China and regions of the country, the Great Wall, famous cities, Chinese writing, and the Chinese zodiac. Profuse colored illustrations include a simple map. (DB)

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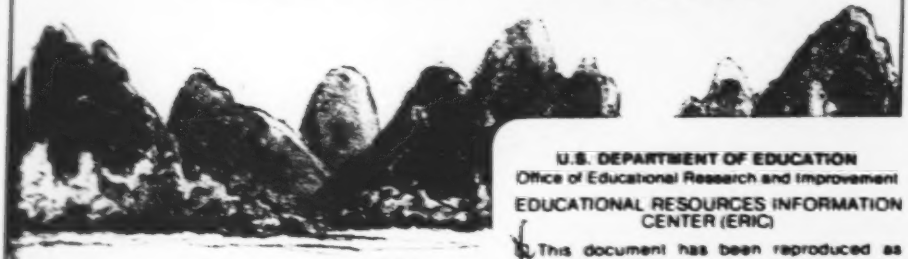
中国

Behind the Wall of China



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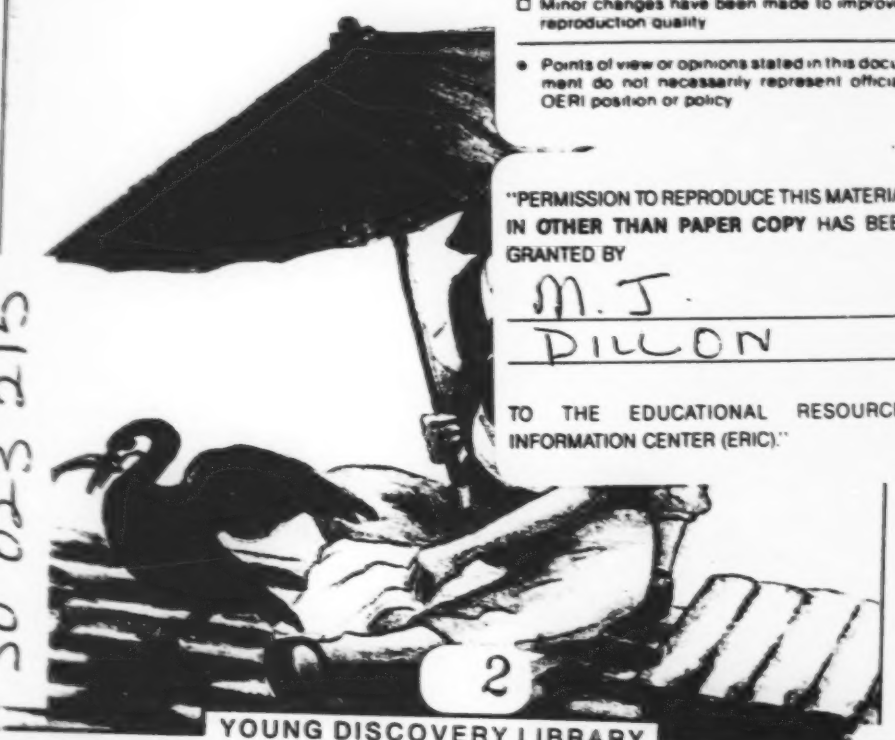

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人咸知其美
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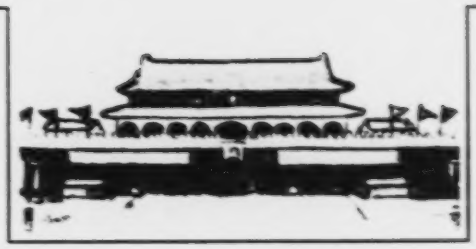

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Behind the Wall of China

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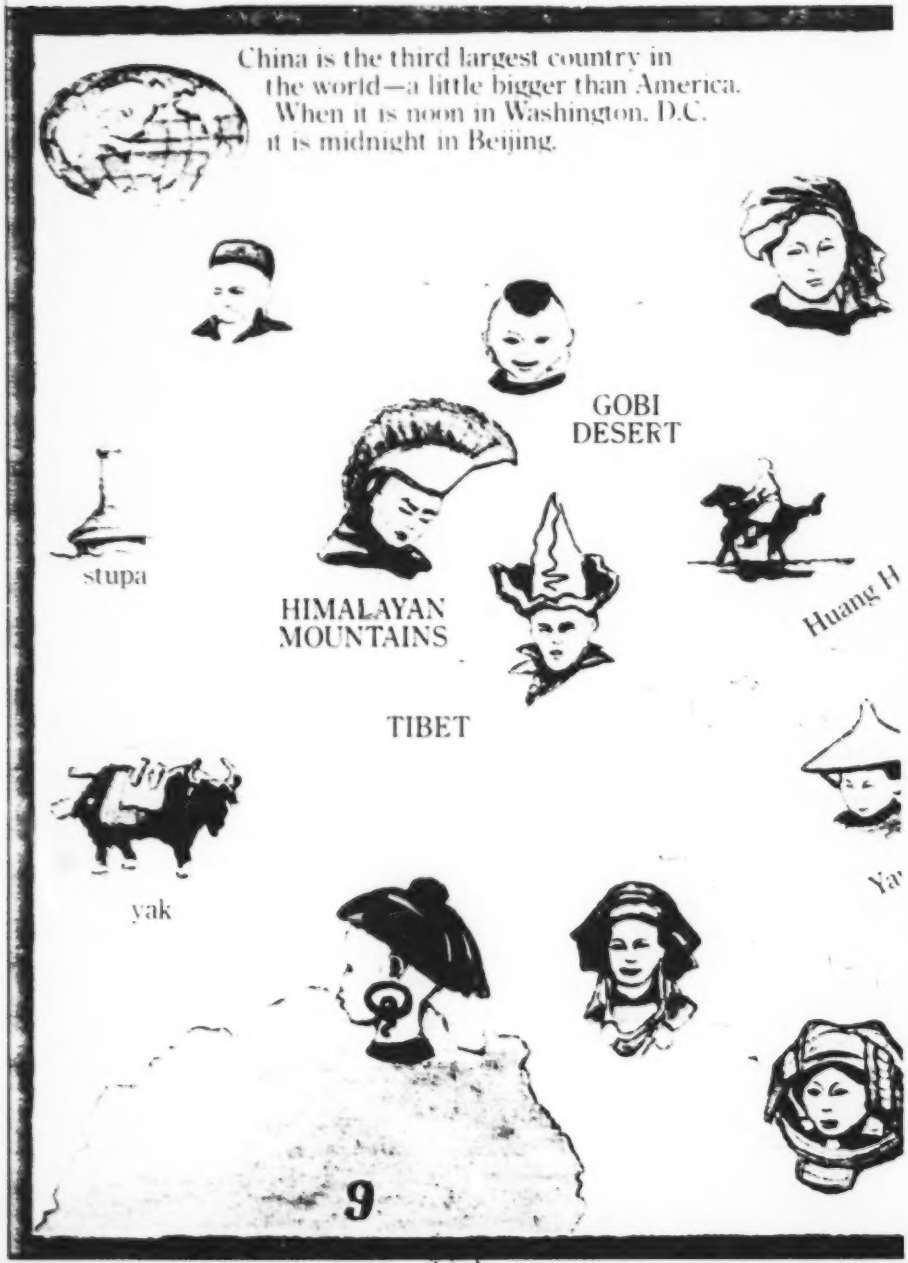
Farmers carry most goods in baskets. Old style: on a pole balanced on shoulder. New style: on a bike. Which is better?

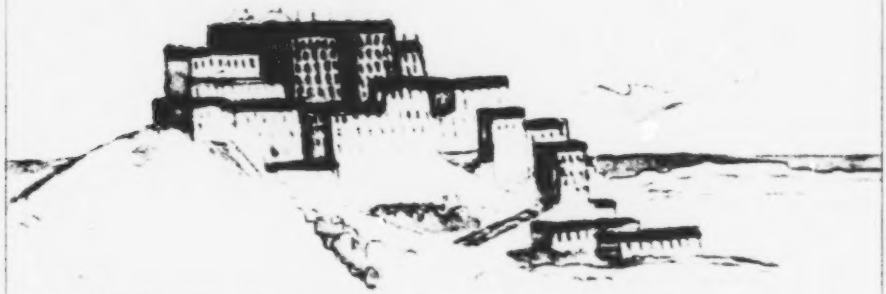
7

One of every four people in the world is Chinese!
China has one billion, two hundred million inhabitants. Its capital city is Beijing (say bay-zhing). Starting at six a.m., crowds pour into the streets. Pushcart vendors, farmers, shoppers even ear-cleaners, are stirring.

China is varied: there are plains, mountains and deserts. And not everyone there is Chinese.

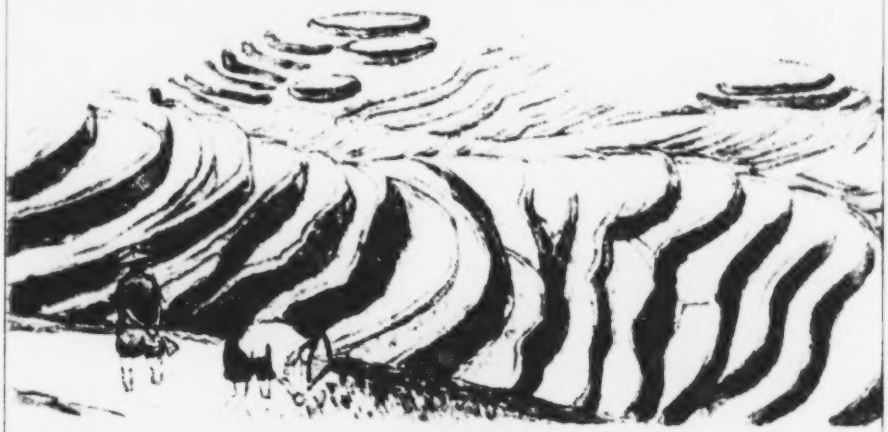


Other people living there: Tibetans, Manchus, Mongols, Koreans... They are minorities.



The Dalai Lama, living god of the Tibetans, once lived in the Potala palace . . . over two miles high, "the roof of the world."

The horsemen of the cold Mongolian plains live in yurts, tents made of skins or felt.

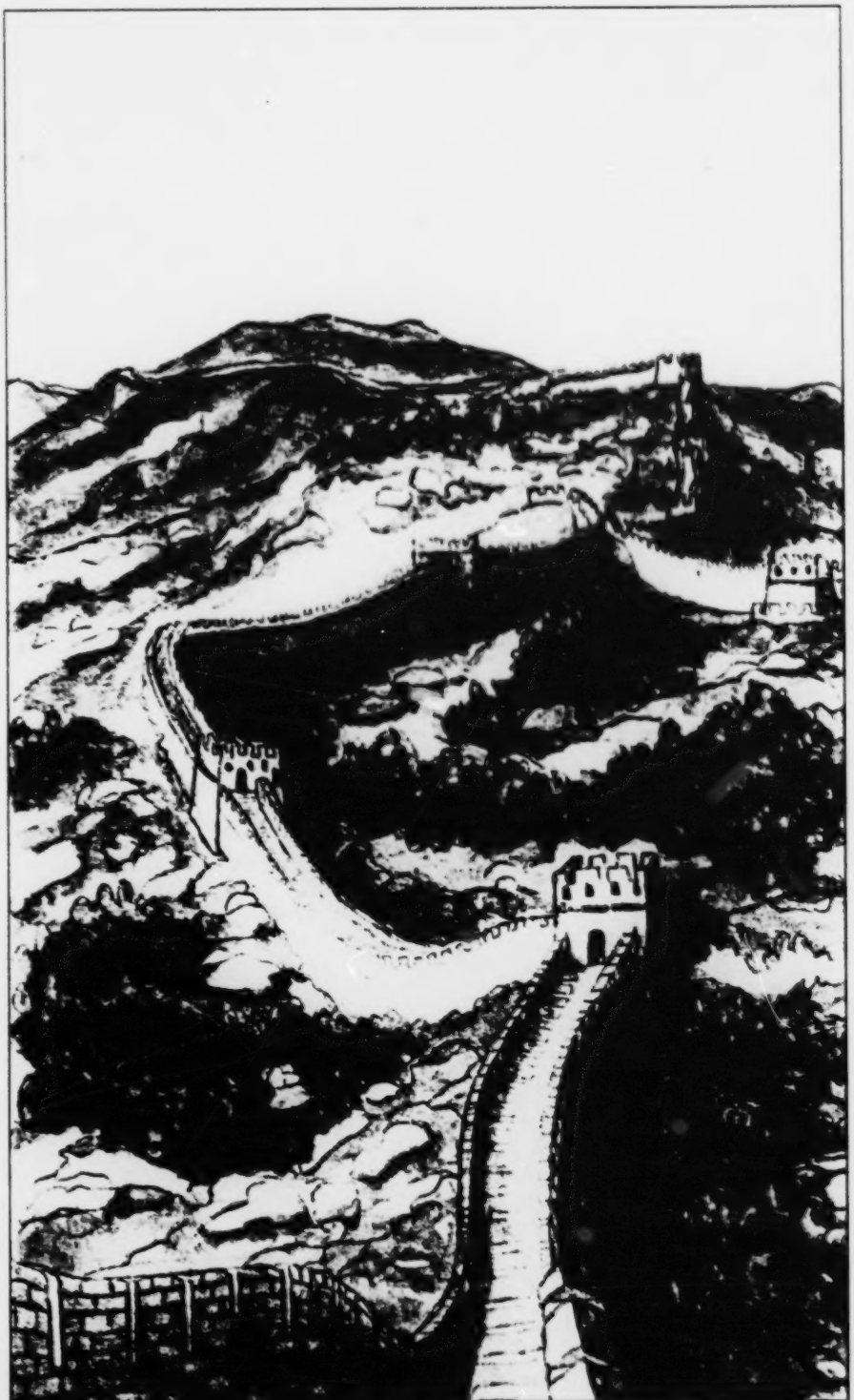


In southern China, rice grown on terraces produces two or three harvests per year. Water buffalos pull the plows.

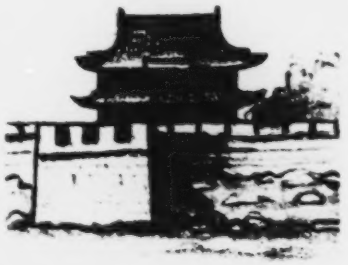
The Huang Ho (2,903 miles) is called "China's sorrow" because of its flooding. The Yangtze (3,964 miles) is less dangerous.

The climate of southern China is tropical, with palm trees, bamboo forests and rice paddies.

The oasis of Turpan, in the middle of a desert in the north-west, is famous for its mosque where Muslims come to pray.



In the east, the Great Wall reaches the Gulf of Chihli, where there are beautiful beaches and fine sand.



The Great Wall is so large it can be seen from the moon!

Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi, began its construction in the 3rd Century, B.C. He wanted to protect China from attacks by barbarian tribes. It took over three million people to build it and it snaked 1,500 miles across the countryside. It is said that each stone cost a human life.

Today, the Great Wall is a big attraction for tourists. It is wide enough to drive trucks on.

This enormous fort, the largest in the world, is at the western end of the Great Wall.

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The Forbidden City, in the heart of Beijing, was the home of the Chinese emperors.
No one but the emperor, his family and his servants were allowed inside. It was hidden from the rest of the world by a high wall and a moat. And, with over 9,000 rooms in 800 palaces, it was easy to get lost! Tourists still do.

The roofs of the Forbidden City are made of tiles, varnished yellow gold. Yellow is the imperial color.

On November 13, 1908, Pu Yi, the last emperor of China, became the ruler. He was only two years old!

The Emperor's throne was in the Room of Preserved Harmony. He carried the title of Son of Heaven, and it was forbidden to speak his name. Emperors ruled China until the revolution of 1911. Then the country became a republic, with a president.

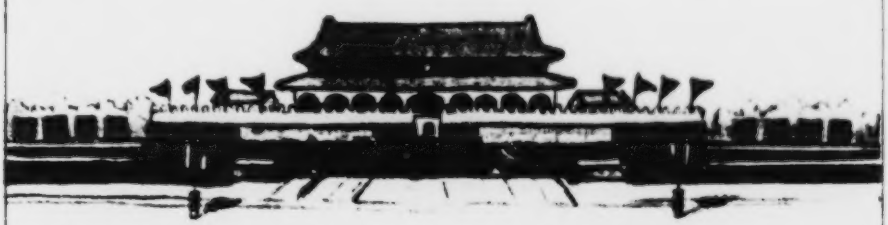
All important ceremonies took place inside the City's courts: coronations, Emperors' birthdays and New Year's Day celebrations.

A People's Republic

After 1911, civil wars were fought for control of China. The Communist Party won the last war in 1949. Their leader, Mao Zedong, became Chairman, a new kind of emperor.

A stamp showing Chairman Mao Zedong.

The Little Red Book by Mao gave the new rules by which people had to live.



Mao died in 1976. His embalmed body is displayed in a mausoleum near Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

China is now a great power. It is also a poor country due to its huge population. The government is very strict; you can be sent to jail if you speak out against it. The Chinese people want more freedom and to live a better life. Changes are being made, but slowly.

Beijing is a very large city with nine million inhabitants. Its main avenue is lined with 15 story buildings and is 25 miles long. It has beautiful temples and fine restaurants and is a center for culture and business.

The emblem of Tiananmen Square has a large star for the Communist Party and four smaller stars for the workers, farmers and middle classes. Political parades are held in this vast open square.

Other Chinese cities are famous.
Xuzhou, with its many canals,
is the Venice of China. Its
Grand Canal is the longest in
the world and connects the
Yangtze River with Beijing.
Marco Polo, who traveled from
Venice, was fascinated by Xuzhou.

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The Chinese are fond of birds and often carry a caged one while out for a walk.

In Shanghai, a large port and industrial center, you can dine in a famous teahouse on pilings. Make a reservation because the city has ten million people!
Tea is the national drink.
Green tea is drunk most often. It is sold in bulk and in tea bags. Many Chinese drink tea all day long but not during meals.

The teahouse in Shanghai

More pigs are raised in China than any other country in the world.

Eight out of ten Chinese live in the country.
In the central and southern regions, mostly rice is grown. Farmers work barefoot in the paddies, ankle-deep in water. Big straw hats protect them from sun. In the northeast, wheat, millet and sorghum are grown. Since much of the country is not farmable, every bit of good land must be used. Poultry is kept everywhere, even in cities. Fish, especially carp, are raised in ponds. Much ocean fishing is done, too.

22.

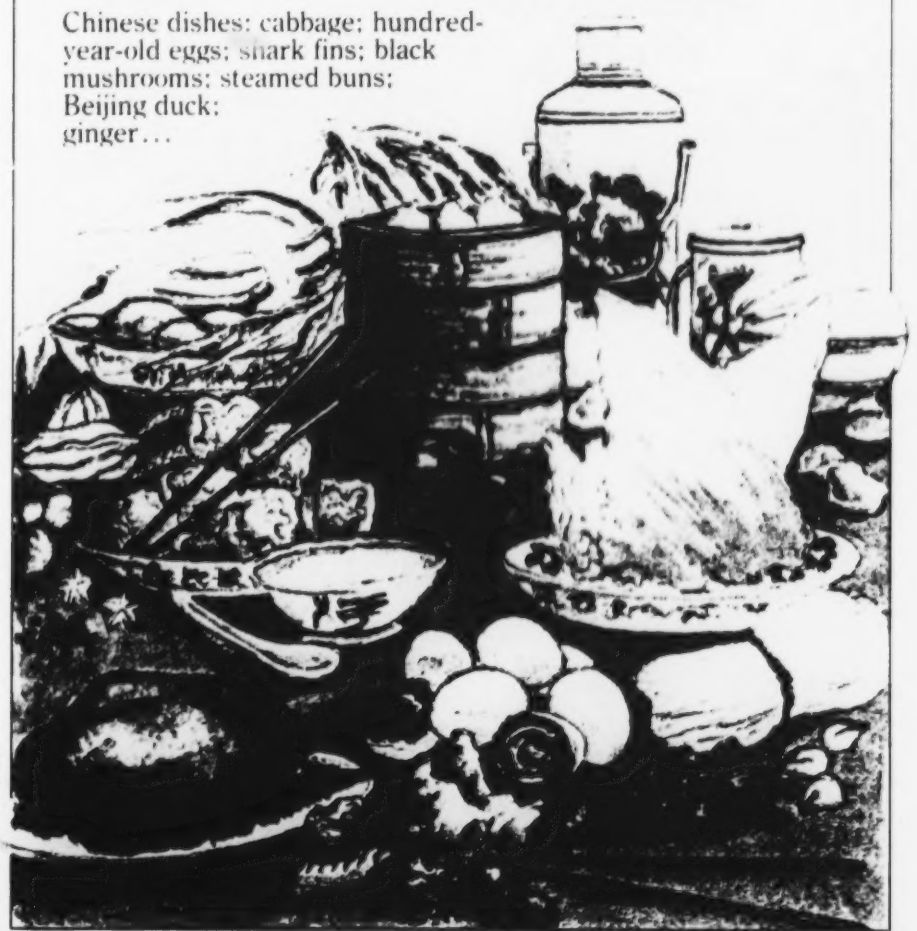
An open-air restaurant in Beijing. The food is cooked by steaming it in stacked baskets made of bamboo.

In the south, rice is eaten with every meal.
But, in the North, the people eat rolls, won tons and noodles made from wheat flour. Both the rice and wheat items are usually served with vegetables, meat, eggs or sauces. And it's all good! That's why so many Americans "eat Chinese." Butter and cheese are rarely eaten. Milk is only for small children. The Chinese drink lots of soy milk, made from soybeans. Meals often end with soup.

Food is cut into bite size and eaten with chopsticks.

The tap water is not good to drink. Thermos bottles hold boiled water for drinking and cooking. The Chinese love to drink hot water. Beer and rice wine are popular too.

Chinese dishes: cabbage; hundred-year-old eggs; shark fins; black mushrooms; steamed buns; Beijing duck; ginger...

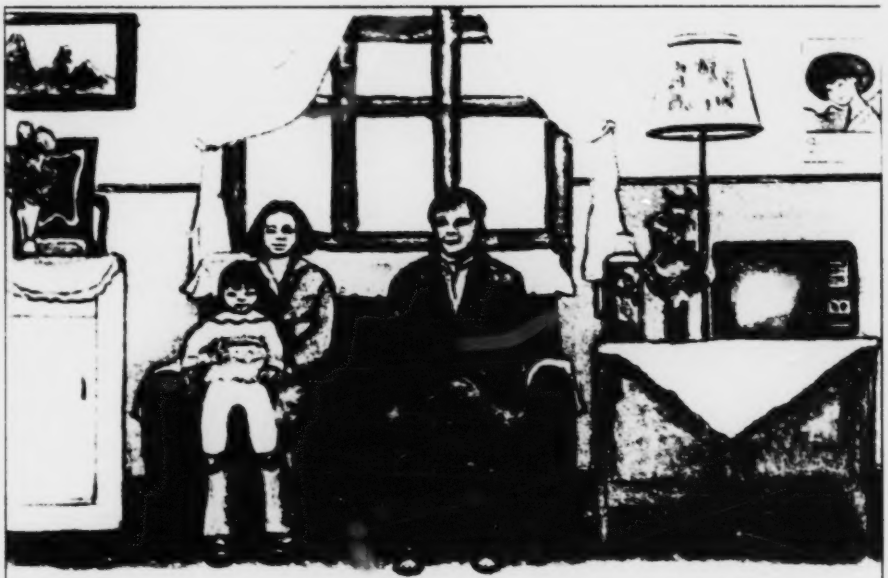


25

What is a Chinese house like?
Four buildings are grouped around a square courtyard. Once a single family had that space, today it may hold several households.

This series of slow movements with a stick acts out combat with an imaginary enemy.

With so little living space, people spend much time outdoors. Early in the morning you will see people, alone or in groups, doing *tai ji quan*. This slow, dancelike exercise is very popular. Some people recite poetry or sing. Others, seated on tiny stools, play cards or chess. Sometimes there's a cricket match. Grandmothers push babies in bamboo strollers.
The babies wear pants with a slit in the back. Diapers are not used in China and babies go "bare bottom," even in winter.



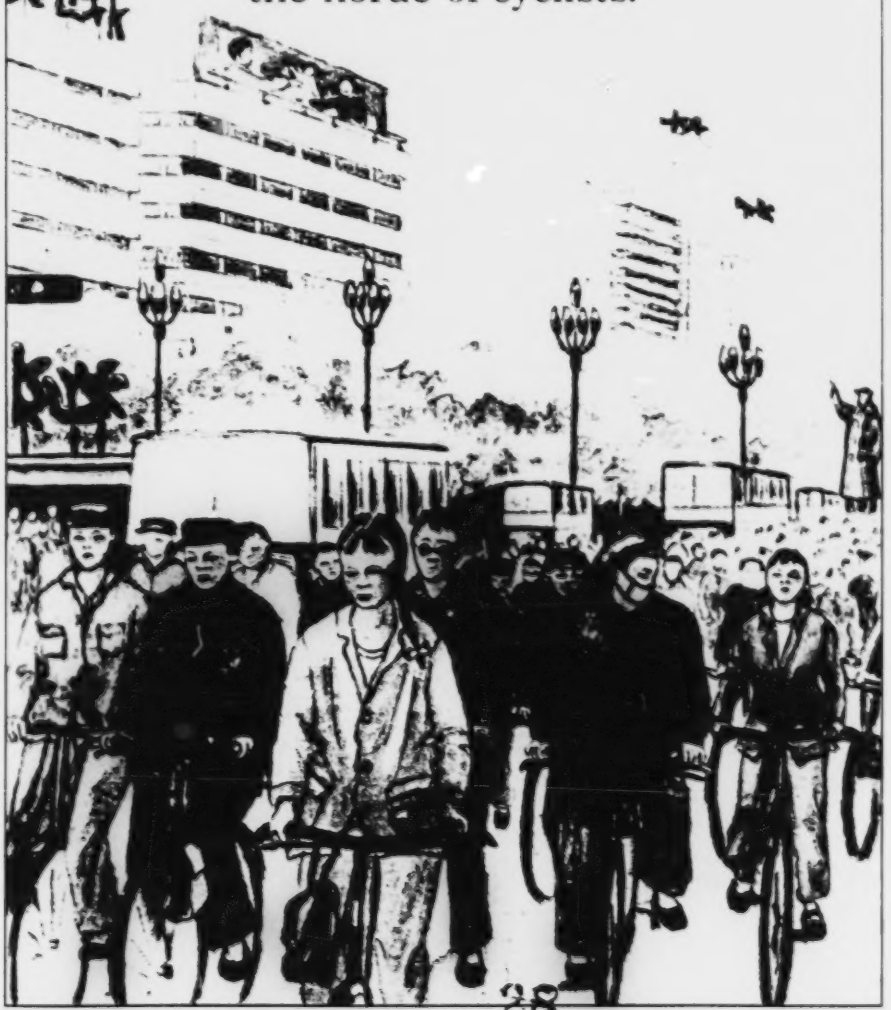
Although there are many modern buildings, families often have to make do in one-room apartments.

Family life

The government tries to limit the number of births. Only one baby is allowed per family. A whole generation of children has no brothers or sisters!

Attending elementary school has only been required since 1985. Many people cannot read or write. Often, farm families put children to work in the fields rather then send them to school. High school classes are overflowing. It is very hard to get into a college.

How do the Chinese get around?
Mostly they ride bicycles.
There are few cars or trucks.
Farmers carry big loads in donkey carts and trains are used for long distances. Buses in the cities are always full, and have a hard time getting through the horde of cyclists.



人
man

日
sun

月
moon

水
water

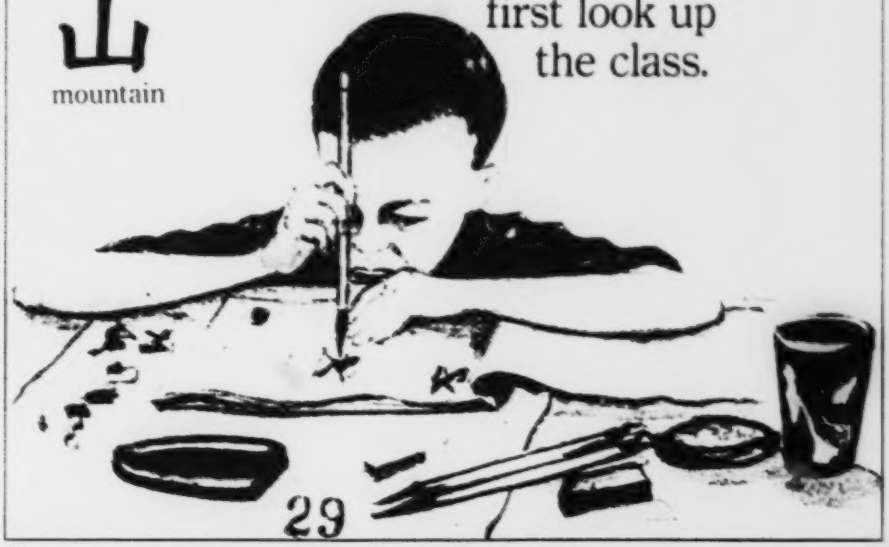
火
fire

山
mountain

How do you write in Chinese?

There is no alphabet. Each word is made of one or two characters. These characters are like little drawings and are called **ideograms**. You have to know at least 3,000 ideograms to read a newspaper. A well-educated person knows 6,000.

Each character has a "key" that gives an idea of the word's meaning. Thanks to these keys—214 in all—words can be classified. When using a Chinese dictionary you first look up the class.



To sign their calligraphies and paintings, artists use a "chop." This is a stamp with their name carved on it.

中国　杭州

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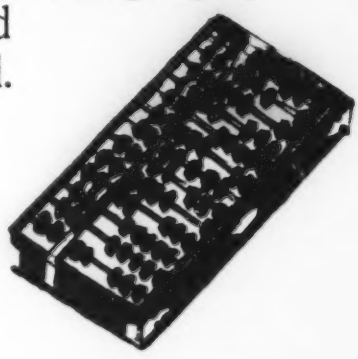
Chinese writing is very beautiful.

The Chinese like to practice fine writing. Brushes, not pens, are used. Ink is made by rubbing an ink stick on a special stone with a little water added. **This process of writing is called calligraphy.** Work done by old masters is prized.

With an abacus, you can make simple calculations very fast. It is used in all the stores.

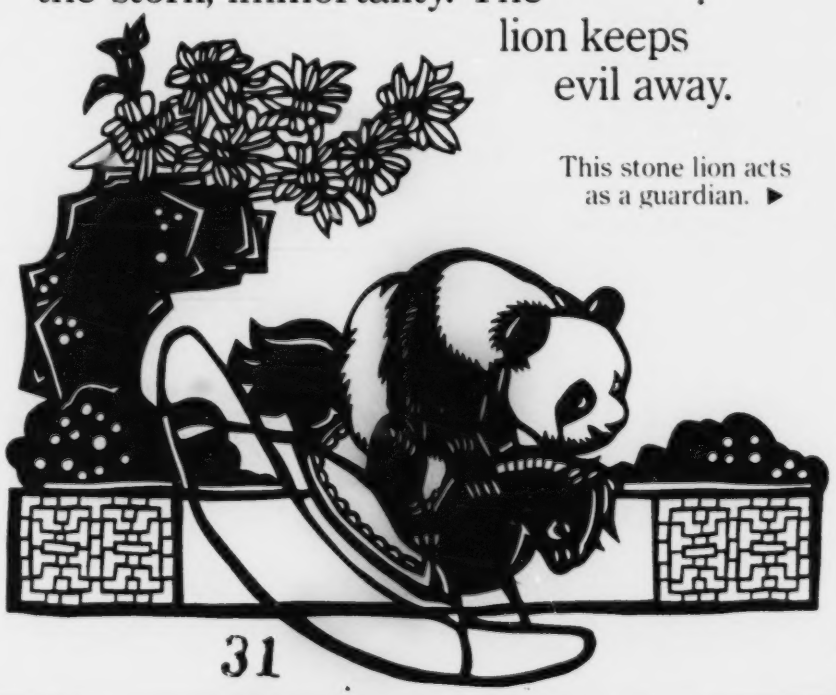


一　二　三　四　五　六　七　八　九　十

1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10

The panda has become a national symbol for China.
The panda lives in bamboo forests and eats only bamboo shoots. This big black-and-white bear is very powerful and has fearsome claws. Fully grown, it weighs over 200 pounds.

Many statues of animals are seen in China.
The elephant symbolizes wisdom. The tortoise, long life, and the stork, immortality. The lion keeps evil away.



This stone lion acts as a guardian. ▶

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New Year's Day is the biggest Chinese celebration.
Like Easter and Passover, the date is not exact. It falls between January 21 and February 19. Parades are held and fireworks chase away evil spirits.

The Beijing Opera is very popular.
It is open all year long and admission is cheap. Actors sing or recite their lines. Shows last for hours, even days. You can leave and come back.

◀ A dragon dance to celebrate the New Year.

Each role has different makeup, done according to tradition. Movements of the hands and sleeves all have a precise meaning.

Symbol of yin and yang.

This Taoist monk is burning incense.

The Chinese have been great inventors. They made the first compass, the first bows and arrows. They invented gunpowder, paper, printing, paper money...

Their two main religions are Taoism and Buddhism. Taoists believe that in nature everything is yin or yang. That is, female or male; hot or cold; negative or positive...

Buddha was a great sage, or wise man, from India. The religion he founded, Buddhism, has spread to all of Asia.
Buddha believed that we are born, die and are born again. This cycle continues until we are in a pure mental state, called Enlightenment.

Do you want to know your Chinese astrological sign?

The year of your birth equals one of twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac. Don't forget: the Chinese year begins at the end of January. Rats are thought to be clever. Water buffalos are calm; tigers are daring. Rabbits are joyful; dragons, lucky; snakes know all; horses are eager; goats artistic; monkeys curious; roosters lively; dogs faithful, and pigs generous!

Rat 1924 · 1936 · 1948
1960 · 1972 · 1984

Horse 1930 · 1942 · 1954
1966 · 1978 · 1990

Tiger 1926 · 1938 · 1950
1962 · 1974 · 1986

Goat 1931 · 1943 · 1955
1967 · 1979 · 1991

Water
Buffalo 1925 · 1937 · 1949
1961 · 1973 · 1985

Monkey 1932 · 1944 · 1956
1968 · 1980 · 1992

Rabbit 1927 · 1939 · 1951
1963 · 1975 · 1987

Rooster 1933 · 1945 · 1957
1969 · 1981 · 1993

Dragon 1928 · 1940 · 1952
1964 · 1976 · 1988

Dog 1934 · 1946 · 1958
1970 · 1982 · 1994

Snake 1929 · 1941 · 1953
1965 · 1977 · 1989

Pig 1935 · 1947 · 1959
1971 · 1983 · 1995

36

The Chinese like to tell little stories like this one:

A man was walking slowly in the rain. Someone asked him why he didn't walk faster. "It is also raining ahead," he replied.

Many Chinese are followers of **Confucius**, another great sage. He taught a code of ethics: how to live as a good person. Here are some Chinese sayings that are like Confucian thoughts.

A word from the heart keeps one warm for three winters.

A quarter of an orange tastes as good as the whole orange.

The wise man and the tortoise travel without changing houses.

The farmer prays for rain, the traveler prays for good weather, – the gods hesitate.

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Young Discovery Library is an international undertaking — the series is now published in nine countries. It is the world's first pocket encyclopedia for children, 120 titles will be published.

Each title in the series is an education on the subject covered: a collaboration among the author, the illustrator, an advisory group of elementary school teachers and an academic specialist on the subject.

The goal is to respond to the endless curiosity of children, to fascinate and educate. For a catalog of other titles, please write to: Young Discovery, P.O. Box 229, Ossining, NY 10562

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人咸知其美
不飾戈

Behind the Wall of China
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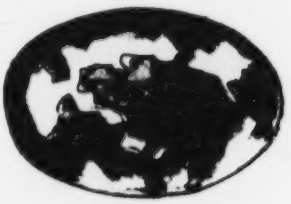
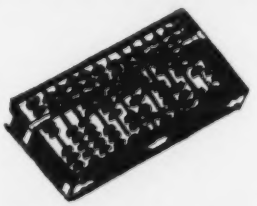


- **Why are Chinese houses guarded by animals?**
- **Why was the Great Wall built?**



- **What foods do the Chinese prefer?**
- **Do all the children go to school?**
- **What do pandas eat?**
- **When is the Chinese New Year?**

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